

Position Statement on the Use of Marijuana

The Butler County Mental Health and Addiction Recovery Services Board believes that the use of marijuana is not benign - which is consistent with major medical organizations - as studies clearly outline the physical and mental harm of marijuana, including risk of breathing illness, implications of increased heart rate, psychotic disease, other cognitive problems, and that children and adolescents are especially vulnerable to its many known adverse effects.

The Board encourages people to examine the ramifications on society, including exacerbating a current problem of employers not being able to hire candidates or retain employees because of failed drug tests, decreased adolescent perceptions of marijuana's harmful effects, relationship problems, and a potential increase of individuals developing addictions to marijuana and other drugs.

The Board continues to believe that marijuana for medicinal purposes should be subject to the same research, clinical trials, scrutiny, and quality control measures as any other approved medication by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In light of Ohio legislation that has approved marijuana for specific medical conditions, we encourage the following:

- **Continued research be done, of the necessary rigor, to dimension any benefits and risks for the most meaningful therapeutic areas.** Limited scientific studies have indicated possible therapeutic benefits for medical marijuana, but significant side effects have also been shown. We encourage any prescribing physicians and patients be mindful of the possible limitations and known adverse physical or mental health risks for the use of medical marijuana, and consider possible alternative treatments.
- **Children be carefully protected from potential misuse in households using medical marijuana.** As examples, dramatic increases in emergency room visits have been seen for children in states with medical marijuana laws, the developing adolescent mind is more sensitive to long term negative consequences for the use of marijuana, and, children's attitudes about the risks of marijuana for recreational usage are reduced in households where marijuana is present.
- **Communities be cautious about engaging in activities with respect to the manufacture, distribution, or sale of medical marijuana.** These actions will continue to be in violation of federal law and will be at risk for unknown enforcement actions in the future. To comply with Ohio state law special certifications will need to be created for all related professions and activities, which have yet to be established by the relevant agencies and will likely show on-going change. These actions may also undermine the reality that marijuana is an addictive substance, and marijuana-use disorders have been shown to increase in states that have passed medical marijuana laws.

In summary, marijuana has the potential for addiction, be it recreational or medical. We believe that the tax revenues for medical marijuana must be returned to local communities to fund broad-based prevention, education and treatment for marijuana-use disorders.